

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks. Of claims 1-20 that were pending in the application, claims 3-10 and 13-20 were withdrawn from consideration and claims 1 and 11 were rejected in the Office Action. Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2 and 12. In response to this positive indication, claims 2 and 12 have been amended to be in independent claim format and to address various grammatical and antecedent basis issues. Claims 2 and 12 should be in condition for allowance. In addition, Applicants have canceled claims 1 and 11, without prejudice or disclaimer.

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,404,919 ("Nishigaki"). Without acquiescing to the propriety of this rejection, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is now moot due to the cancellation of claims 1 and 11, without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, as the grounds for the rejection have been fully obviated, a withdrawal of the rejection is both warranted and earnestly solicited.

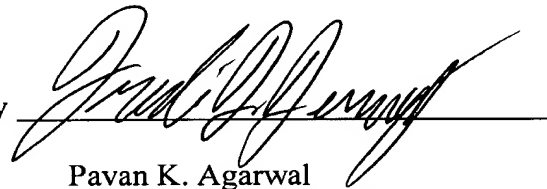
CONCLUSION

For the aforementioned reasons, claims 2 and 12 are now in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if such communication would expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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THE COMMISSIONER IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE ANY ADDITIONAL FEES WHICH MAY BE REQUIRED REGARDING THIS APPLICATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, OR CREDIT ANY OVERPAYMENT, TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741. SHOULD NO PROPER PAYMENT BE ENCLOSED HERewith, AS BY A CHECK BEING IN THE WRONG AMOUNT, UNSIGNED, POST-DATED, OTHERWISE IMPROPER OR INFORMAL OR EVEN ENTIRELY MISSING, THE COMMISSIONER IS AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE THE UNPAID AMOUNT TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741. IF ANY EXTENSIONS OF TIME ARE NEEDED FOR TIMELY ACCEPTANCE OF PAPERS SUBMITTED HERewith, APPLICANT HEREBY PETITIONS FOR SUCH EXTENSION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 AND AUTHORIZES PAYMENT OF ANY SUCH EXTENSIONS FEES TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741.

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Each of Figures 1, 14, 16, 27 has been amended to have all text in same direction as the orientation of the particular drawing, as required by 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(p)(1). In some cases, e.g., Figs. 1 and 14, text was rotated within a box. In other cases, e.g., Figs. 16 and 27, a box, which contains text, was rotated in its entirety. No substantive changes have been made to the drawings.